

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 /088 W

-----022484 060318Z /62

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 719

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

AMCONSUL BUKAVU

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER ECJ4/7

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 6951

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MILI, FR, CG

SUBJECT: ACCELERATED FRENCH TRAINING OF AIRBORNE BRIGADE

REF: KINSHASA 6194

1. GENERAL BABIA, COORDINATOR OF ZAIRIAN ARMY (FAZ) GENERAL STAFF, ADVISED CHIEF ZAMISH JUNE 29 THAT TRAINING OF FAZ PARATROOPERS BY FRENCH INSTRUCTORS IS TO BE ACCELERATED. IN MID-AUGUST AN ADDITIONAL 36 FRENCH INSTRUCTORS ARE TO JOIN 26 ALREADY HERE TO BEGIN TRAINING THE 312TH AND 313 TH AIRBORNE BATTALIONS. THESE BATTALIONS, ALONG WITH 311TH WHICH RETOOK KOLWEZI AIRPORT DURING SHABA II, WILL FORM THE NEW 31ST AIRBORNE BRIGADE.

2. THE 311TH HAS ALREADY RETURNED FROM SHABA TO KINSHASA'S CENTER FOR AIRBORNE TROOP TRAINING (CETA) TO RESUME ITS INTERRUPTED TRAINING. THE CENTER'S COMMANDANT LT. COLONEL BALLADE (FRENCH ADVISOR) OUTLINED PLANNED TRAINING SCHEDULE FOR BRIGADE DURING JULY 4 BRIEFING AT CETA AFTER DEMONSTRATION JUMP BY ELEMENTS
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OF 311TH. BECAUSE CENTER CAN ONLY ACCOMMODATE TWO BATTALIONS (1,200 TRAINEES), THE TRAINING OF THE 312TH AND 313TH BATTALIONS WILL BE STAGGERED. TRAINING OF 312TH IS EXPECTED TO RUN FROM AUGUST 1978 TO FEBRUARY 1979; THAT OF 313TH FROM OCTOBER 1978 (WHEN 311TH IS SCHEDULED TO COMPLETE CETA PROGRAM) UNTIL APRIL 1979.

3. COMMENT: REFTEL REPORTED MOBUTU HAD DECIDED TO ACCELERATE

TRAINING OF AIRBORNE BRIGADE TO CREATE RAPID REACTION/INTERVENTION
FORCE. MOBUTU'S DECISION PRESUMABLY WAS INFLUENCED BY MAYELE
(311TH) BATTALION'S CREDITABLE PERFORMANCE IN SHABA II AND BY
DESIRE TO REPLACE PAN-AFRICAN FORCE WITH ZAIRIAN TROOPS AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE. THIS IS FIRST CONFIRMATION WE HAVE RECEIVED THT
FRENCH HAVE AGREED TO CHANGE ORIGINAL TRAINING SCHEDULE OF ONE
BATTALION PER YEAR. GIVEN INCREASED FRENCH COMMITMENT TO TRAINING
THESE BATTALIONS, WE PERHAPS SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR FRENCH PRO-
POSAL THAT US ALSO ASSUME GREATER ROLE BY PROVIDING ADDITIONAL
LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FOR INTERIM PAN-AFRICAN FORCE.

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